

MERWIN, Maj. U.S.

DRAWER 10 C

CONTEMPORARIES

THE JOURNAL OF THE



Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

J.B. Merwin

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
TELEPHONE, 1800 WORTH

COMMISSIONERS

LAWSON PURDY, PRESIDENT
JOHN J. HALLERAN
CHAS. T. WHITE
COLLIN H. WOODWARD
ARDOLPH L. KLINE
FREDERIC B. SHIPLEY
JOHN J. KNEWITZ
C. ROCKLAND TYNG, SECRETARY

April 17, 1917

Mrs Kate B. Hayden
870 Franklin Ave
Columbus C.

Dear Mrs Hayden: Mrs Fitzgibbon
and her daughter told me yesterday
you would be interested in hearing
about the last days of Major Merwin,
who died on the 3^d of April.

I met the Major first last October
at 1732 Grove. There is an interesting
reference to him in a little book,
"Footprints of Lincoln," by J. T.
Hobson. The book carries a small
cut of him. After reading about
him in Hobson's book, I trailed
him to Grove St., Brooklyn. As
he needed the money, I converted
some of his Lincoln narratives
into cash. I wrote the articles
myself. If I had met the Major
10 years ago, all would have been

CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

COMMISSIONERS

LAWSON PURDY, PRESIDENT

JOHN J. HALLERAN

ARDOLPH L. KLINE

CHAS. T. WHITE

FREDERIC B. SHIPLEY

COLLIN H. WOODWARD

JOHN J. KNEWITZ

C. ROCKLAND TYNG, SECRETARY

TELEPHONE, 1800 WORTH

2
different. While his mind and body
were still strong he would have been
induced to reduce his remem-
brances to writing. He must have
written and published an authori-
tative life of Lincoln, with special
reference to his ^{Lincoln's} temperance leanings.
After February 1 the Mayor could not
sit up. In fact he was as helpless
as an infant. Dr. Fitzsimmons was
thoroughly devoted to him. Passively
he might better have been taken
to a hospital, but he would not
listen to such a suggestion. He
was very happy to the last in the
little apartment in Grove St.
Here I saw him about once a week.
I did not often find him in error
in relating Lincoln incidents. Of
course I had to carefully check
up everything historically important

CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
TELEPHONE, 1800 WORTH

COMMISSIONERS

LAWSON PURDY, PRESIDENT

JOHN J. HALLERAN

CHAS. T. WHITE

COLLIN H. WOODWARD

C. ROCKLAND TYNG, SECRETARY

ARDOLPH L. KLINE

FREDERIC B. SHIPLEY

JOHN J. KNEWITZ

3

before I offered it for publication.
I accompanied the body to the mortuary
Chapel in New Britain, where I made
an address to the Grand Army veterans
and relatives. A bugler sounded "taps"
at the close of the service, and the
dear old man, his body wrapped
in a beautiful new silk flag sent
by Mr. Mills, was laid away. ~~in~~
He gave his inscribed watch to
Syman A. Mills. It is to go to a
grandson, Kendall. Before the Mayor
died I had him make a formal
affidavit concerning Lucas's
connection with the watch. This
greatly increases its historic value.
He did not leave much else, save two
old documents (one of them his army
pass) and a few papers and trinkets.
He gave everything but the watch to
Miss Fitzgibbon. I do not know

CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF
TAXES AND ASSESSMENTS
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING

COMMISSIONERS

LAWSON PURDY, PRESIDENT
JOHN J. HALLERAN
CHAS. T. WHITE
COLLIN H. WOODWARD
C. ROCKLAND TYNG, SECRETARY
ARDOLPH L. KLINE
FREDERIC B. SHIPLEY
JOHN J. KNEWITZ

TELEPHONE, 1800 WORTH

4
Whether Mrs ^{F.}Fitzsimons is to be paid
anything for her services in looking
after the major. If he had left an
estate, there would be no question
about it. Leaving out the matter
of "worldly drags", the major was
rich in the best sense, in that he had
the consciousness of a life well spent.
That a mind-treasure it was, the real-
ization that he had sustained Abraham
Lincoln by personal association,
prayer and counsel, for four
tumultuous years! No one could
take that away from him! We
got that with him to-day in the
house not made by hands.

No, I'm not old enough to have
been a G.A.R. comrade of the Major.
My father was a Civil War soldier.

Very cordially

Chas. T. White

Lincoln by Merwin

The people of New England, and of the whole Country, are in a fair way to learn something of the real character and greatness of President Lincoln from the revelations made in various addresses by his friend and associate, Major J. B. Merwin, of St. Louis.

The Times, Courant, and other papers of Hartford, gave large space to a report of Major Merwin's address, at the Hartford Opera House, Sunday afternoon before Lincoln's birthday.

Members of the Hartford posts of the Grand Army of the Republic were given a special invitation to attend. The veterans entered the lobby in double file, occupying the front seats at the center of the orchestra circle, reserved for them.

The *Times* said: "'Lincoln, the Christian Statesman' was Major Merwin's subject. From the time of his first meeting with Lincoln in 1852, on, to the day of his assassination the speaker gave a vivid description of his noble character, using many items of conversation he had had with him, together with many anecdotes, illustrating in the concrete, various phases of his great character."

* * * * *

The *Courant* said: "The Young Men's Christian Association had a distinguished guest, at the Hartford Opera House yesterday afternoon in the person of Major J. B. Merwin, who spoke on 'Abraham Lincoln, the Christian Statesman.' The first rows of the theatre were filled with G. A. R. men, who turned out in force to give Major Merwin a deserved and hearty welcome, and every

reference to the man, whom they had loved so much, in the trying days of the war, was hailed with deafening applause."

"The Major certainly had the great audience with him from the very beginning. Major Merwin gave a varied, close, concrete view of Lincoln and his career. He said that there had been 170 or more biographies of Lincoln's life published, all but one or two of them had missed the real fundamental basis, of Lincoln's greatness that was at the bottom of it all—his religious side. He went on to explain his acquaintance with Lincoln, with whom he was intimately thrown from 1852, on, until the day of his assassination in Washington. Major Merwin dined with Lincoln the day he was assassinated.

Lincoln from his innate sense of Justice, always saw conditions, from the standpoint of the other man, as well as from his own. That is what made him so successful as a lawyer.

He was always ready for the arguments of the other side. He had thought it all out from the other man's point of view before the trial.

The sagest of philosophers, he was at times, the most ridiculous of jesters, the best informed man on political affairs of the nineteenth century, but above all a Christian gentleman was Lincoln, realizing his own dependence on God more than those less able to wield great things, when it came to the crises.

Major Merwin ended with a blood-tingling eulogy for the men of the G. A. R., who saved to the world this form of government."

"HIS THRILLING AND BEAUTIFUL STORY"

Chaplain Hilton Writes of Major Merwin

Connecticut Comrades Thrilled by his Story of
Abraham Lincoln, "The Christian Statesman,"
and the Days when Men Died for the Flag.

Comrade Fred Meyer of this city has received the following highly interesting letter from Department Chaplain William F. Hilton, of Hartford, Conn., relative to Major J. B. Merwin, who is to speak in the Grand opera house tomorrow evening on Abraham Lincoln.

Hartford, Conn.
Oct. 22.

My Dear Comrade:

Having received a letter from my friend, Major J. B. Merwin in which he speaks of your noble purpose in the effort to secure a monument for our heroic dead, and I say our dead, for in a real and true sense we are of one body—let me extend my most hearty wish that you may more than realize your object.

We hear among ourselves, as oft repeated in the quiet silence of our own gatherings, "that God may grant that the memory of the noble dead who freely gave their lives for the land they love may dwell ever in our hearts."

This is our own sentiment and expresses that devotion which a patient and long suffering service engenders, but the sentiment needs to be carried further into the life about us and to become the seed of a new fruitage and that fruitage found in those we are now among and from among whose association we ere long must disappear.

The monument must speak for us even better than the blood of righteous

Abel and be a witness to that spirit which was in them *who gave their lives* for the land they loved; a land bequeathed in peace to those who witness where the monument stands in whom must dwell a spirit equally as sacrificing and suffering.

May the day soon come when the land shall be filled not only with school houses in which patriotism is taught; with churches where patriotism shall be baptised with the spirit of "the Christ" who laid down his life for all but also our resting places and habitations be beautiful and adorned with those silent testimonies that reveal a patriotism that is sanctified.

So I wish you great success in your undertaking.

I congratulate you in having secured Major Merwin's services to thrill the heart and to make the pulse beat quick with *his beautiful story* of our Martyred President. If he inspires you as he did us, there will, I am sure, be started a current of intense patriotic life in your community that will arouse the sluggish, awaken the indifferent and cause the pride to rise in behalf of that noble band who loved not their lives only to offer them as a sweet-smelling sacrifice upon the great altar of our blessed land. May the good Lord prosper you in all good and bless you with His abounding grace.

Yours fraternally,

WM. F. HILTON.

Surgeon General will
 send Mr. Menwin when
 we may think the
 matter seems very
 proper—
 X A. Lincoln
 July 24, 1862.

Facsimile of Autograph Order of Abraham Lincoln

An Evening With Abraham Lincoln

AS long as time endures, or this
 nation exists the name of
 Abraham Lincoln will be a hal-
 lowed one to every liberty loving
 person on earth, no matter where
 he may be found, or what his
 nationality or creed. Washing-
 ton, the father of his country,
 Lincoln, its savior, are names that
 will never die. What memories
 the name of Lincoln inspires—

what patriotic thoughts kindle, by the recollection of his deeds. Lincoln the
 reformer—Lincoln the patriot—Lincoln the emancipator. Can those of
 mature years forget while living the shock that came, the indignation that
 spread over land and sea when news of his assassination was flashed
 around the world.

All civilization poured its sympathy to us in the loss of the best friend that
 liberty had—the champion of the poor and down trodden. From first to
 last he was the peoples' champion. "The great commoner," he has been
 called. Of his glorious achievements the whole world knows. Of his
 assassination, ELIHU BURRITT, THE NOTED AMERICAN, writing to a friend,
 said: "The irrepressible conflict has come and gone. It is behind us. We
 can now face a new future and see God's face in it with hope and comfort.

There is one event just gone to the record of these great years, so sublime
 in its working upon the mind of the world, that it seems to be taken up into
 the ranks of those Divine Providences and Revelations that have come at
 intervening spaces of a thousand years to mark the history of God's dealings
 with mankind. Certainly not for a thousand years has the death of one man
 produced such an impression upon the whole of Christendom, as the sudden
 and most atrocious taking off of Abraham Lincoln. No American life ever
 had such a burden put upon it; none that has breathed on our continent ever
 performed a greater work. But he was stronger in his death than in his
 life. Living, he saw the wide and ensanguined rift in the American Union
 close forever its devouring jaws to open no more; dying, he closed the wider
 chasm between the two hemispheres. I say it reverently, by death, he made
 of twain one, abolishing the *enmity* between the Old World and New,
 between England and America. The fires of indignation that burst forth
 from the heart of the English nation at his martyrdom, and the surging flood
 of sympathy with our country at the bereavement with it unlocked, seemed
 in one day and night, to burn up and down every unfriendly sentiment to-
 ward our nation, that ever found expression in Great Britain."

Jefferson Davis said, "Next to the destruction of the Confederacy the
 death of Abraham Lincoln was the darkest day the South has ever known."

An Evening With Abraham Lincoln



A Lecture of Absorbing Interest

Abounding in reminiscences and anecdotes descriptive of his life and achievements, by one who knew him well, who, in his life was the friend and confidant of the martyred President.

Maj. J. B. Merwin, of St. Louis, Mo.

An Evening With Abraham Lincoln

THE LIFE OF LINCOLN, the record of his glorious deeds is a trumpet call to higher ideals and nobler Americanism, typifying as it does, his almost Divine nature as a man, his patriotism as a leader, his far-reaching wisdom as a ruler.

Those who lived in the anxious time of his administration will feel their blood tingle anew as they listen to the story of his deeds—a story that will live forever. It will bring back to them the memory of the tented camp field—the fife and the drum—brother arrayed against brother. The hope, the suspense, the fear that prevailed as the battle went one way or the other. The glorious anthem of peace that went up as the struggle was ended. The wave of horror and indignation that swept o'er the land east, west, north and south, at news of his assassination. Major J. B. Merwin is peculiarly fitted to speak of Abraham Lincoln, for he was his personal friend and associate in the days before he was chosen to lead the people. During his administration Major Merwin was the trusted friend of the martyred President, and as such has a fund of memories intensely interesting, showing the character and giving an insight into the motives that prompted this great American citizen, Abraham Lincoln.

By some Major Merwin's discourse has been described as a "burst of patriotic eloquence rarely equalled," but it is more than that—it is the heart-felt tribute of one who is living, to a friend who has gone before, recalling the acts of his life time, the noble deeds he performed.

The Life of Lincoln can be read in books, but they breathe an artificial air.

In listening to Major Merwin you look upon one who was wont to grasp the great emancipator by the hand—who greeted him from day to day—who knew of his ideals, his hopes, his disappointments—of his faith!

Cold type spread upon inanimate paper fails to awaken your interest or kindle your memory, rousing you to a higher sense of patriotism or veneration for the illustrious Lincoln, as do the living breathing words of one who was at his side, and whose mind is stored with priceless memories of our venerated martyr. As one friend paying tribute to another, Major Merwin tells many interesting facts heretofore unknown to the world at large, and all in all his discourse is one that should be listened to by every patriotic citizen. When you have listened to the story of the saviour of our country as told by Major Merwin, you will feel that you have cause to thank the Creator that you are of the same race as Abraham Lincoln. The story of his life and deeds as told by Major Merwin is one of enthralling interest, arousing the patriotism of the listener, young or old, to its highest pitch. **An Evening with Lincoln** is an occasion that should not be missed.

Excerpts from Press Notices of Major Merwin's Lecture on Abraham Lincoln

"The most brilliant and complete analysis of Lincoln's career and character ever given," "Commanded the closest attention and thrilled the hearts of all," "Able, eloquent," "Forceful, graphic, eloquent," "Seldom, if ever, have an audience been thrilled with such eloquence and power," "Attracts, charms, rivets attention, carries conviction," "His humor convulses, his imagery electrifies, his reasoning is brilliant," "Received with the greatest enthusiasm," "A brilliant and popular orator," "His hearers were held enthralled from the opening to the closing sentence," "At the close the orator was given a veritable ovation," "A brilliant orator and a man of ripe scholarship."

An Evening With Lincoln



MAJOR J B MERWIN

Do not fail to
hear this dis-
course on his
life and ser-
vices as ren-
dered by his
friend and
✧ associate ✧

Maj. J. B. Merwin
Of St. Louis

A T

It is unquestionably true that no man at present alive knew Abraham Lincoln more intimately than did Major Merwin. Those who fail of the opportunity of hearing him on this occasion will probably never again be privileged to listen to such a broad minded discourse by one who was so long in such close touch with the martyred President.

EVERY PATRIOTIC CITIZEN
Young and Old Should Hear This Address

**The Lecture will Positively be given whether the
weather is favorable or not, as the time
of speaker is limited**

N. B. - Lecture Committees desiring to arrange dates for this lecture
address _____

